



Improving
the Quality of Life
in South Somerset

South Somerset Together Partnership Agreement

1. The purpose of the partnership

South Somerset Together is a partnership of public, private and voluntary organisations committed to *improving the quality of life in South Somerset*. It operates in a spirit of trust, respect and cooperation to bring organisations and people together to communicate about difficult issues facing the community. It negotiates ways to bring about changes for the benefit of those who live, work in or visit South Somerset.

In 2011, it adopted simplified arrangements and secured funding to maintain an independent Chair and dedicated Coordinator through Partner contributions.

2. Structural arrangements

The Assembly

- Attended by all members of the Partnership and community representation;
- Meets three times a year;
- Acts as a sounding board e.g. reviewing progress on priorities and raising and testing views on future focus;
- Provides a good networking opportunity for a wide range of organisations in order to form productive links and hear about/discuss the big issues affecting the District;
- Used to set overall direction;
- One of the Assemblies of the Partnership will be an Annual General Meeting open to the public and any interested parties to attend. This will talk about its work, debate key issues facing the District and answer questions / seek feedback.

The Strategy Group and decision making

- A sub-group of partners consisting of representatives responsible for their organisation's resources in the area with the authority to "make deals" i.e. Chief Executive/Director level for larger organisations as appropriate;
- Meets as necessary and at least 6 times a year for short focused meetings;
- Discusses progress on agreed priority work;
- Partners raise current issues to get steer and input from wider group;
- Agrees how to progress work on priorities with individual partners leading on each work area (negotiate roles and responsibilities);
- Includes main public sector bodies and leading business and VCS representatives;
- Deploys resources to priorities as appropriate.

In the case of a vote being required for decisions at Strategy Group then each funding partner will have a vote.

3. Strategic Priorities

1. **Building resilient communities:** Tackling health inequalities, supporting families and encouraging volunteering;
2. **Skills:** Helping people especially young people or people with no qualifications to gain the skills needed for employment;
3. **Rural market housing to meet local need:** Developing new models for market housing in rural communities; and,
4. **Transport:** Steps taken to secure an integrated transport system for Yeovil and improve

transport options in the District. With the continuing public transport cuts service providers need to consider alternative ways of connecting with their service users.

These will be reviewed annually.

4. How does it work?

South Somerset Together aims to achieve more and better outcomes for less resources and independent effort through collaboration. It does this by:

- Directly commissioning, delivering or sponsoring activities/programmes that act as a catalyst for change;
- Focusing on issues that have consistently proved resistant to earlier actions;
- Being willing to take calculated risks by trialling new ways of working together;
- Helping partners identify better, more cost effective ways to deliver local services;
- Engaging communities in discussions with partners about what the issues are, what support they need to do things for themselves and practical examples of what has worked/not worked elsewhere;
- Accessing external funding and negotiating the pooling of local budgets/resources to make things happen;
- Disseminating information about what has been learnt/achieved;
- Lobbying at a local and national level on the issues that are important to the communities of South Somerset;
- Championing living and working in a sustainable way that will benefit people in the District, nationally and globally, today and for future generations.

5. Finances

South Somerset District Council remains the principal funder, host organisation and banker for the partnership. Financial contributions from other agencies are set out in the attached schedule. All partners contribute in kind resource in support of SST's core activities and priority programmes. The partnership will:

- Review its programme at Strategy Group meetings;
- Agree its priority actions for the following year at the Assembly held in the Spring;
- Ensure partners have confirmed their contribution towards core costs for the following year by December of each year;
- Secure resources (whether from partner organisations or other sources) towards the delivery of its agreed programme.

6. SST Posts and Partnership liabilities

Partners have reconfirmed their commitment to retain an Independent Chairperson and part-time Coordinator. The Co-ordinator post is funded by the 4 main funding bodies, SSDC, Yarlington HG, Yeovil College & Yeovil & District Hospital Trust, on an equal basis.

Each Autumn SSDC will issue a financial liability statement setting out any employment costs that would arise from the termination of the Partnership. These Partners have agreed to share these employment liabilities equally.

7. What it will not do?

South Somerset Together does not:

- Duplicate what its partners and/or other organisations do as their "day job";
- Deliver any programme beyond the pilot stage. If successful, it should be mainstreamed by participating organisations;
- Contribute resources to existing programmes, unless to develop a new/innovative approach.

Updated August 2014

SCHEDULE: Partners' contributions for 2014/15 and in principle for following 1 year:

Funding Partner	Contribution level for revised funding model 2014/15 (and in principle for following 1 year) (£)	Comments
SSDC	12,000	
Yeovil College	5,000	
Yarlington Housing Group	5,000	
Yeovil District Hospital	5,000	
Knightstone HA	1,000	
Bournemouth Churches HA	1,500	
Yeovil Chamber	100	
TOTAL	29,600	
Est total annual running costs	28,500	

In addition to the above the following Agencies have offered "help in kind":

- Somerset County Council
- Avon & Somerset Police – hosting of meetings
- Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – hosting of meetings
- SSVCA and CAB – hosting of meetings
- South Somerset Mind – hosting of meetings